



Wastewater News

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Clean Water . . . a better environment
Office of Wastewater Management

Working towards Clean Water



Upcoming Meetings, Conferences and Training

Office of Wastewater Management (OWM) Session(s) at August 1998 National Meeting (Strengthening the Foundation of the Nation's Water Quality Program, Philadelphia, PA, August 24-28, 1998, Sponsored by the Office of Water) -

NPDES Permit Writers' Training Course

Permits Division conducted the NPDES Permit Writers' Training Course in Portsmouth, New Hampshire on May 11-15. This was the third of a series of five courses that will be co-sponsored by the Department of the Navy and the Department of Energy in 1998. Other course locations planned for this year are Austin, Texas; and Seattle, Washington. For more information, contact Daniel Weese on (202) 260-6809.

Title VI Federal Implementation Advisory Committee Meeting

The National Advisory Council for Environmental Policy and Technology, Title VI Implementation Advisory Committee will be holding a meeting on October 19-20, 1998 (location to be determined). Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin in their programs or activities. The purpose of

this committee is to review and evaluate existing tools, techniques and processes for 1) assessing whether disparate impacts based on race, color, or national origin have occurred or have the potential to occur; 2) mitigating disparate impacts where they occur; and 3) operating environmental permitting programs in compliance with Title VI. For more information, contact Angela Lee on (202) 260-6814 and Mahesh Podar on (202) 260-5387.

National Environmental Training Center for Small Communities (NETCSC) Offers Management Course Exclusively for Tribes

NETCSC will offer its "Basics of Environmental Systems Management" course without charge to Tribal officials August 18-19 in Sacramento, Calif. NETCSC cosponsors include the California Intertribal Environmental Council and the National Drinking Water Clearinghouse which is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and located at West Virginia University. NETCSC trainers will be joined by presenters from the Rural Utilities Service [formerly U.S. Farmers Home Administration], the Rural Community Assistance Program, and the National Drinking Water Clearinghouse. Each will explain how their services can benefit tribes. The course will be limited to 35 Tribal participants and will cover wastewater, drinking water, solid waste, decision making, and communication. For more information, contact Betty B. Ford on (202)

260-8510.

Environmental Technology Verification Grants Awarded

The Office of Research and Development awarded Environmental Technology Verification (ETV) grants for 2 pilot projects, one for Source Water Protection (which includes decentralized treatment of wastewater), and the other for wet weather flow (Sanitary Sewer Overflows, Combined Sewer Overflows and storm water) to the National Sanitation Foundation International (NSFI).

NSFI is the partner that will operate the testing center for the environmental technology verification of these 2 pilot projects. A stakeholder group will be convened for each pilot in the fall. For more information, contact Joyce Hudson, Municipal Technology Branch, on (202) 260-1290.

Clean Water Needs Survey (CWNS) Database Modernization

An Alpha Test of the production system for the CWNS database took place at the Systems Development Center (SDC) in Arlington, VA on June 15 --17. The Alpha Test provided EPA and other participants the opportunity to see how the system will function to support the CWNS 2000. It also afforded participants an opportunity for hands-on experience with the production database system. Following the alpha testing, additional training on the production system will be conducted at Region II offices on September 15 -17, 1998. Installation

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will occur in late fall. For more information, contact Jim Shuster on (202) 260-5829.

Regulations at Work

Project XL: Performance-Based Pretreatment Pilot Programs (Federal Register Notice -Request for Proposals)

EPA recently published a Federal Register notice (June 23; 63 FR 34170) requesting proposals from POTWs interested in implementing alternative local pretreatment programs. EPA is not proposing a change to the regulations at this time. Instead, in response to the findings of stakeholder studies regarding measures of performance, EPA is requesting POTWs interested in implementing environmental performance-based programs to submit Project XL proposals explaining how they would change their pretreatment program implementation.

To qualify for this Project XL program a POTW must: currently administer an approved pretreatment program; have a solid record of compliance; and have five years of influent, effluent, and sludge quality data, as well as three years of ambient water quality measurements for its receiving water or be able to demonstrate the ability to collect ambient data. The project proposed by the POTW must then meet the Project XL criteria as explained in the Federal Register notice.

The intent is to allow programs that have demonstrated a strong compliance record and an ability to measure environmental performance to investigate alternative ways of implementing local pretreatment programs that will produce superior environmental performance. The

alternate program would use specific measures to determine whether or not implementation procedures are achieving their desired results.

Some POTWs which have mastered the programmatic aspects of the pretreatment program (identifying industrial users, permit monitoring, etc.), want to move into more environmental performance-based processes. These POTWs have expressed an interest in being allowed flexibility to focus their resources on procedures that they believe will provide greater environmental benefit. These POTWs want to be able to make decisions to allocate resources based on the risk associated with industrial contributions they receive or other factors. Some POTWs want to be able to apply resources to ambient monitoring in their receiving waters and/or to integrate their pretreatment programs with their storm water monitoring programs. Since they have limited resources, the POTWs believe they need the flexibility to drop some of the prescribed programmatic elements and redirect these resources.

Given all of these considerations, the pilot program is being limited to POTWs that have mastered the programmatic elements and have available a significant amount of environmental performance data (or a demonstrated ability to collect the necessary data). These conditions can form the basis for creative alternative approaches that best allocate limited resources. It is expected that by providing this discretion to the POTWs, the POTWs will be able to focus their limited resources on activities that produce superior environmental performance.

For local POTW Pretreatment Programs, superior environmental

performance may include:

- (i) Reducing pollutant loadings to the environment or achieving some other environmental benefit beyond that currently achieved through the existing pretreatment program (including collecting environmental performance data and data related to environmental impacts in order to measure the environmental benefit. Such information would include data on pollutant loadings to the environment, ambient environmental conditions and measures of the impact of these conditions on the health of ecosystems. The data should be able to support decisions concerning the future use of pretreatment program resources),
- (ii) Reducing or optimizing costs related to implementation of the pretreatment program with the savings used to attain environmental benefits elsewhere in the watershed in any media, and
- (iii) Other environmental benefits gained by allowing pretreatment program flexibility.

If you have any questions or if you would like additional clarification please contact Patrick Bradley at (202) 260-6963.

Streamlining the General Pretreatment Program Requirements

EPA Headquarters has drafted a proposal to streamline a number of

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requirements under the General Pretreatment Regulations found in 40 CFR part 403. Several "preproposal" draft documents were provided to outside stakeholders (State regulators, governmental associations, professional and trade associations, and environmental interest groups) for review and comment prior to drafting the proposed rule. EPA has also discussed the issues with stakeholders at numerous public meetings, including several sponsored by the Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies (AMSA) and the Water Environment Federation (WEF). The proposed regulatory changes address thirteen issues that include allowing POTWs to accept certain acidic wastes if these wastes will not damage their collection systems, exclusions or variable requirements for smaller facilities that contribute insignificant amounts of pollutants, clarification of requirements for implementing certain pretreatment standards, and more flexible reporting, inspection and sampling requirements. The proposed rule has been sent to OMB for formal review and concurrence. EPA anticipates publishing the proposal in the Federal Register in late summer 1998. For more information, contact Jeff Smith at (202) 260-5586.

Proposed Rule on Electronic Reporting in the NPDES Program

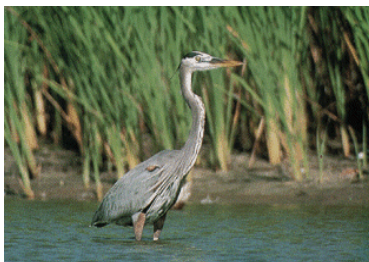
EPA is proposing changes to its NPDES regulations to allow reports and other information to be submitted electronically. When EPA promulgated the current NPDES regulations, the Agency did not anticipate the need or technologies for electronic reporting. Consequently, the current regulations do not specifically address use of electronic reporting technologies. The proposed rule would establish criteria for electronic reporting and a specific process and

conditions for electronic reporting of discharge monitoring reports (DMR) to EPA that are intended to achieve reliable and secure electronic reporting in the NPDES program. The proposal addresses electronic signature, certification, and record keeping requirements that permittees would follow when submitting forms to EPA electronically. We expect to publish a proposed rule this fall. For more information contact Robin Danesi on (202) 260-2991.

Other News

Outreach and Technical Assistance Programs, 1997 Accomplishments

The Small Underserved Communities team issued a 1997 accomplishment report for the outreach and technical assistance programs managed in the Municipal Assistance Branch of the Municipal Support Division. The report provides information to customers, stakeholders and partners of EPA's efforts to help small underserved communities achieve adequate, cost-effective wastewater systems. Included in the report is a description of the programs, the resources target to each program, and highlights of the accomplishments made in 1997. Copies are available at the National Center for Environmental Publications and Information, the Small Flows Clearinghouse, and the Office of Water Resource Center. The publication will be available through



OWM's homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/owm>. For more information, contact Maria Campbell on (202) 260-5815.

Millions of Dollars In Funding For Rural Communities

On July 13, 1998, Sylvia Bell attended a ceremony at the White House, at the request of senior officials of the Rural Utilities Service(RUS)/USDA, where \$155.8 million in federal funds were given to 87 rural communities in 38 States to address their drinking water problems. Vice President Gore and Agriculture Secretary Glickman stated to the 50 people in attendance that the combination of grant and loan funding will help to build and upgrade the basic infrastructure needed to sustain rural communities. A press release identifying the states and communities receiving funding is available. OWM will continue to work collaboratively with RUS to coordinate and leverage funding to provide clean and safe water for small, rural and tribal communities. For more information, contact Sylvia Bell at (202) 260-7255.

Small Communities Data Collection Effort

The Small Underserved Communities Team within the Municipal Support Division, has an effort underway to identify, through existing sources of information, the wastewater needs of small and rural communities in the areas of facility financing, training, technical assistance, operations and maintenance and compliance assistance. The Team's objective is to acquire a comprehensive set of data from which it can determine the state of small communities in each of the areas. The Team will use this information to determine the need for new program initiatives or adjustments

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to its existing outreach and technical assistance programs for small communities. The Team's subcontractor, SAIC, has provided a preliminary report which summarizes the type, extent and accessibility of data available from 45 different sources, including federal/ state/ local agencies, environmental organizations and groups, educational institutions and others. For more information, please contact Sylvia Bell at (202) 260-7255.